POULTRY FRYING APPARATUS

Cross-Reference to Related Application

This is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 08/625,505, filed Mar. 28, 1996, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,758,569, issued Jun. 2, 1998.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention pertains to a novel frying apparatus specifically designed for deep-frying of turkeys, other poultry, or similar sized food items.

Deep-frying of large food items, such as whole turkeys, presents many problems related to the large amount of oil needed to submerge the item, as well as the danger associated with heating large amounts of oil to a high temperature and immersing a large object into the hot oil. Previous attempts to fry turkeys have included using commercial stockpots to heat the oil. Standard size commercial stockpots tend to have a relatively wide diameter in proportion to their height, especially when compared to an upright turkey. A large amount of oil must be heated in the stockpot in order to submerge a turkey (which is preferably fried in an upright position) for frying. The use of standard size stockpots is therefore expensive and wasteful. A stockpot with higher sides and a smaller diameter is available, for example, from Morrone. Although the need for a pot in which to fry turkeys and the like has been met by tall and narrow pots, the prior art has not provided a way to insert and remove a large object, such as a turkey, into the pot.

There have also been attempts to design an apparatus to insert and remove a turkey from a pot of hot oil. Conventional frying baskets generally have one or two handles located near the top edge of a mesh or perforated basket which is placed in the hot oil. These conventional baskets are not appropriate for use in frying turkeys, because they are often not strong enough to support a large turkey (up to 16 pounds), and the handles are close to the hot oil, which is dangerous when there is splattering as the turkey is inserted or removed in addition, frying a turkey requires immersion of the basket in hot oil for an extended amount of time (45–55 minutes for a 15 pound turkey), which will cause the handles to get hot, creating further danger when removing the turkey from the hot oil. Furthermore, frying baskets tend to be quite expensive to manufacture.

Other attempts to insert and remove a turkey have included dropping the turkey into the oil with human hands, which is very dangerous. Also, metal coat hangers have been used to insert and remove the turkey, which also expose the user to the danger of splashing hot oil. These prior attempts also present the danger of oil spilling from the stockpot onto the open flame of the gas cooker, which can cause a fire to break out.

The present invention overcomes these problems with a novel poultry frying apparatus that is described herein.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The object of the present invention is to provide a frying apparatus that allows a whole turkey or similarly sized food item to be deep-fried in oil while minimizing the danger presented by exposure to hot oil.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a frying apparatus that can be utilized to fry a whole turkey evenly and avoid burning.

It is a further object of the present invention to minimize the amount of oil used to fry a whole turkey.

The above-mentioned objects are achieved by the provision of a frying apparatus that has a raised rack that fits inside a large vessel for holding cooking oil. The raised rack has plate with a central rod that is attached to the plate at its lower end. The plate has perforations to allow oil to flow through the plate. The central rod of the raised rack is releasably coupled to a grab hook to raise and lower the rack into and out of the vessel one coupling mechanism that can be used is to provide a loop at the upper end of the central rod, and a hook at one end of the grab hook that can be inserted through the loop. The grab hook also has a handle for grasping. The plate of the raised rack has a plurality of feet on the bottom surface that rests on the interior of the vessel.

The vessel or stockpot that contains the oil is designed so that the sides have a height greater than the diameter of the vessel. Preferably the height is approximately sixteen inches and the diameter is eleven inches.

The method of frying a turkey or other poultry with the frying apparatus involves the steps of pouring cooking oil into a large pot sufficient to submerge a turkey, placing the pot on a gas cooker and heating the oil to a desired temperature. The turkey is then placed on a raised rack. The rack has a perforated plate with a central rod which is inserted through the body cavity of the turkey. Next, a grab hook is coupled to the central rod, and the grab hook and rack with the turkey is lowered into the oil. The grab hook is then removed from the rack, allowing the turkey to cook in the oil. When the turkey is done frying, the grab hook is coupled to the rack and the turkey is lifted from said oil.

A further embodiment of a poultry frying apparatus according to the present invention includes a support element connected to a spacer portion. The spacer portion can be intermittent or continuous and optionally have at least one opening to facilitate flow of oil. The spacer portion functions to space the support element away from the floor of a cooking vessel to prevent burning of poultry supported by the support element.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of the stockpot and lid;

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of the raised rack;

FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the grab hook;

FIG. **4** is a perspective view of a turkey being fried in the apparatus;

FIG. **5** is a cross-sectional view of a turkey being removed from the apparatus;

FIG. **6** is a perspective view of a turkey after being removed from the oil.

FIG. **7** is a perspective view of another poultry support according to the present invention.

FIG. **8** is a perspective view of a poultry frying apparatus utilizing the poultry support of FIG. **7**.

FIG. **9** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **9**—**9** of FIG. **7**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

As shown in FIGS. **1**–**3**, the preferred embodiment of the frying apparatus **10** has a vessel or stockpot **12** with a lid **14**. The stockpot **12** is generally provided with handles to lift and move the pot easily. A raised rack **16** is designed to fit inside the stockpot **12**, and a grab hook **18** is designed to couple with the raised rack. The stockpot **12** is preferably designed with a relatively small diameter and tall sides